

Dua opens its doors in Singapore

Dua Associates has opened an office in Singapore after obtaining a licence from the Office of the Attorney General. The Singapore office will be headed by former Procter & Gamble general counsel for Asia Pacific & Australia, Ashok Chhabra, who joined the firm as a partner in October.

Dua Associates represents various Singapore-based clients with business interests in India. The firm believes its Singapore presence will help it encourage and support the increased business activity between Singapore and India, while offering clients the benefit of its proven track record in Indian business law.

Dua Associates' managing partner Ranji Dua told *India Business Law Journal*: "Dua wishes to establish a centre for excellence in Indian law in Singapore by making qualified and experienced professionals in Indian law available to clients in the city and region. Lawyers from Dua offices in India will work closely with professionals in Singapore, thereby enhancing legal capabilities in the latter. This will provide comfort to Indian

and non-Indian clients with interests in Singapore, ASEAN and China or those who have expressed a desire to consider such investments."

The firm plans to have up to four lawyers based in Singapore but could increase this number, depending on the nature and volume of work it receives.

Dua also hopes to capitalize on and showcase its dispute resolution capabilities in Singapore, which has been aggressively promoting itself as a regional arbitration hub. "Increasingly, international commercial contracts are specifying dispute resolution under SIAC [Singapore International Arbitration Centre] rules with Singapore as the venue," Dua

said. "Some of our partners and senior advisers are already accredited arbitrators with SIAC and Dua intends to use its Singapore office to further develop and promote Singapore as a venue for arbitrations, governed by SIAC rules."

Dua said the office would offer advice solely on Indian law and approach Singaporean firms for local law advice.

Dua Associates is only the fourth Indian law firm to launch operations in Singapore. The first Indian firm to establish itself in the city was Nishith Desai Associates, followed by Kochhar & Co and Bangalore-based private equity firm Lexygen. Several other Indian firms have representative offices in the city.

